

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, founded in 1912, is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to 1,000 members, excluding Student members with proof of student status. When vacancies exist, membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Regular membership is \$55; Sustaining \$75; Patron \$150; and Student \$25.

All members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and, excepting Student members, the current Keepsake. All members have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member. All members may purchase extra copies of Keepsakes or *News-Letters*, when available. Membership dues (less \$10 for Student members and \$17.50 in the other membership categories) and donations, including books, are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code.

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Senator James D. Phelan Library

VILLA MONTALVO, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA

by Jack Douglas

JAMES D. PHELAN, United States Senator, three-term reform mayor of San Francisco, business tycoon and connoisseur of the arts, left his beautiful mountainside estate to the San Francisco Art Association when he died in 1930. The Villa Montalvo was, in his words: *to be used as far as possible for the development of art, literature, music and architecture by promising students.*

Years of absentee ownership under the San Francisco Art Association did not always lead to satisfactory results, so that when a locally led Montalvo Association offered to take on the stewardship in 1951, the San Francisco association was relieved of the burden of attempting to maintain the property.

Through the efforts of the Montalvo Association, the estate has risen to become a major center for the arts. With its artist-in-residence program, permanent art gallery, carriage house concert room, outdoor performance stage, literary arts program and aesthetic surroundings, Villa Montalvo has more than met the hopes expressed in the Senator's will.

With all of this activity, however, it was easy to lose sight of the history of the Villa and of the great man whose dream it was. To help resolve this, the Montalvo board of directors formed a committee to reconstruct the Senator's library in its original location on the north side of the Villa,

adjacent to the entrance. The restored library would serve as a small museum, recalling the gracious era of Phelan's residency.

The library committee, under the leadership of Mrs. Anne Loudon, was made up of local historians, former librarians, antiquarian booksellers, and devoted bibliophiles. Once the shelves were replaced and the room redecorated, it became the task of the committee to fill the shelves. At first it seemed most expedient to do this by acquiring older books that looked appropriate, along with historical photos and memorabilia from the Senator's life. Then it occurred to us that we might replace or return the volumes that were in the original library.

The Senator's books were dispersed shortly after his death, and the only record we had of the holdings was a list made of the volumes that were given to the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Since the Bancroft was reluctant to return the books, we have used the list to acquire duplicates when they are available, and in editions that pre-date Phelan's death. As useful as this list is, it does not include volumes from authors whom the Senator supported, or from the many literary

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people who congregated at the Villa. These books, we assumed, were taken by relatives or close acquaintances when the Villa was stripped of his personal effects.

The most notable of his writer friends was Gertrude Atherton, whose novels and historical non-fiction brought the California experience to readers throughout the English-speaking world. It is said that the Senator decorated each of her new volumes with a little flag when it was put on the library shelf. Mrs. Atherton was probably the only non-family member who had a suite in the Villa. As grande dame of Northern California Pen Women, she officiated at numerous literary soirees in San Francisco and at the Villa.

Many important writers followed the Senator's example and built homes nearby in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Prominent among these were: Fremont and Cora Older, Charles and Kathleen Norris, Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Charles Erskine Scott Wood and his partner, Sara Bard Field.

As a would-be poet himself, Phelan frequently entertained the poets Edwin Markham, Joaquin Miller, George Sterling, and San Jose State professor-poet Henry Meade Bland. With the backing of Mrs. Atherton and Phelan, Dr. Bland became Poet Laureate of California, succeeding Ina Coolbrith. Several years before his death, the Senator set his sights upon the beautiful young Berkeley tennis player Helen Wills, who, he felt, was the model of California womanhood. Not content that she was the first female athlete superstar, he encouraged and counseled her in the writing of poetry.

The Senator's library must have contained all the works of these authors, as well as many others. At present we have serviceable copies of a number of titles, but it is now our goal to acquire as many of the original signed copies as can be located. Funds to purchase volumes have always been in short supply, but thanks to the antiquarian book dealers on the committee, Susan Klein, George Kane, Wendell Hammon, and George Lundquist, eight annual antiquarian book fairs were held at the Villa, with over two dozen carefully selected booksellers participating. A number of



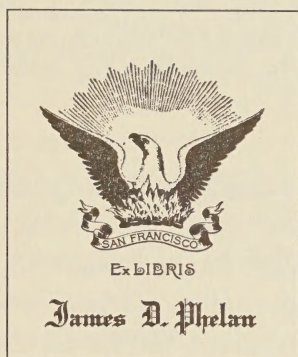
Library at Villa Montalvo, 1926

Photo by Gabriel Moulin

volumes with the Senator's book plate surfaced at these fairs and were added to the collection. The book fair was discontinued for a variety of reasons in 2001. The Montalvo board now grants a small annual stipend to maintain the Library and purchase an occasional volume.

The library committee has been successful, through its publicity efforts, in acquiring many appropriate gifts. A good example was the collected plays of the Bohemian Club. This club, which began as a gathering of San Francisco artists, writers, and journalists, now has a worldwide membership that includes prominent men of politics and industry. The group meets each summer in the beautiful Bohemian Grove on Marin County's Russian River. Phelan was a devoted Bohemian, and some of his happiest memories included his tenure as the club president and his participation in the summer activities at the Grove.

If any of our readers have volumes with Senator Phelan's distinctive book plate, we would be delighted if the owners would consider contributing or selling them to the Library so that they might, once again, grace the Senator's book shelves. And by all means visit the Library when you come to the Villa. Our books do not circulate, but they are available for perusal by persons interested in the life and times of a great Californian.



Potential donors and those wishing tours may contact one of the committee co-chairs: Ms. Althea Anderson, telephone 650-323-4556.

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Professor Douglas, a member of the Roxburghe Club and The Book Club of California, is a Santa Clara County historian whose book *Historical Highlights of Santa Clara County* has recently been published by History San Jose.

A Different Breed of Book Collector

by Richard H. Dillon

Alleged Californian but in reality Naturalized Texan Richard H. Dillon is currently editing the overland diary of C. C. Cox for a joint venture with the Book Club of California and the Book Club of Texas. Book Club of California readers know Dillon for the handsome *Texas Argonauts: Isaac H. Duval and the California Gold Rush* (1987). N.T. Dillon trained in this arid area through editing the diary of Benjamin Butler Harris in *The Gila River, the Texas Argonauts and the California Gold Rush* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960).

My friend Dudley Cramer suggested that I grasp my pen and set down some thoughts on book collecting, just as he has done and as our mutual amigo, Al Lowman, has done for the Texas and Southwestern Collectors Association. Even though Dud knows that I am not a Texan, or even a New Mexican, but a Native Son of California. (However, I have become so fond of the Lone Star State since first seeing it as a private in the Coast Artillery/Anti-Aircraft Corps in February 1943 at Camp Wallace, near Galveston, that I sometimes add titular initials after my name when signing letters, as if I possessed a Ph.D. or at least a Brit baronetcy. Thus, Richard H. Dillon, N.T.; meaning Naturalized Texan.)

I was at first hesitant, if not reluctant, to follow my friend's suggestion even as quasi-Tejano because I hardly considered myself to be a genuine book collector; that is, one with a capital K.

But then I reconsidered and realized that I have, indeed, been a collector of books and not just an accumulator, willy nilly, of the same. Almost all of my accessions have been in the field of history, mostly American history and especially Western Americana.

However, I have been a horse of a different bibliographical hue from most true book collectors whom I know. It has been my good fortune to have been what the book trade calls an "institutional collector" in that I was, for years, a librarian at the Sutro Library in San Francisco, and

the Sutro Branch of the California State Library. At the same time that I became a professional librarian, I started out as a free-lance writer of non-fiction, mostly history, but with some travel articles thrown in for good measure.

To genuine book collectors, rarity and value (not always the same thing, of course) are highly desirable, and like the realtors' reiteration of "location," the collector's mantra is often "condition, condition, condition." Bona fide collectors also pray for first editions and limited editions, hand bindings and fine-press editions, and association copies with authors' signatures, perhaps presentations, at least an attractive bookplate to enhance provenance. As both librarian and author, these factors have been of interest to me, to be sure. But they are not tops in priority. Content rules! Pertinence, completeness, accuracy; these are the things I am for. Although I certainly do not want books that have been physically abused, such factors as condition, as well as format, must yield to the value of the text *per se*.

Oddly, the limiting factor, over the years, in my two collecting spheres has always been the same. Dinero. Or, rather, the lack of it; perennial impecuniosity. This was passing strange for the head of a branch of one of the largest state libraries in the nation. But I inherited a policy that, as of 1950, held that there would be no book acquisition budget; that my staff and I were to work with, "develop," our existing bibliographical sources. True, I was in charge of a very rich collection of some 90,000 volumes. Our library was certainly not dead, nor moribund. But it was absurd to think that new acquisitions were unnecessary to build upon existing strengths as well as developing new areas of subject matter.

At first the best that I could do was to encourage gifts to the library. These were, thankfully, already considerable in one area of our specialization — genealogy and local history. I unashamedly began a campaign of begging letters to authors and publishers (often one and the same in the field of family history) for copies of new works. I never had the guts to ask for two copies, much as I would have liked to do so. This would have been ideal. Since we had a strong policy of interlibrary loans, we

would then have had both a circulating copy and also a restricted reading room copy for the many genealogical researchers (eventually, whole busloads from the hinterland!) who came to the library in person. Luckily for us, zealous writers of family histories were, and still are, much more interested in spreading the genealogical word than they are in making back their investments in time, paper, and ink. Bless them!

But I never solved the two-copy problem. So, from one side, I was damned for lending a certain book and, from the other flank, damned for not lending a particular volume. Buying two copies would have halved what little budget I had. Most genealogies (then, at least) were not expensive. But local history was something else. The most critical works were growing scarce and costly. These were America's "mugbooks," the 19th Century county histories illustrated with woodcuts and lithographs. They are the bibliographical bedrock for an Americana collection. And today they are often "out of sight" in terms of price.

Since our reference service covered the history of the entire U.S., not just the West, securing so many of these essential tomes was difficult. I was slowly able to build up a modest accessions budget and pored over dealers' catalogues when I was not haunting the shelves of antiquarian book dealers.

Eventually I was able to stretch my wee budget with some sort of hocus pocus and was able to purchase some groups of manuscripts to parallel our splendid Sir Joseph Banks Papers, acquired in London by our founder, Adolph Sutro. Banks, President of the Royal Society, was one of Captain Cook's botanists. I even acquired some collections of photographs, a new area for us. One was the archive of Louis J. Stellman, whose historic views of California's Mother Lode and San Francisco's Chinatown of yore are of great value. Also, for example, a collection documenting the pursuit of Pancho Villa after his bloody raid on Columbus, New Mexico.

In books, I broadened our holdings a little by acquiring at least a sampling of neglected authors, like Louis Becke of the South Seas, and I made a start, at least, in securing decorated trade bindings when they

were neither costly nor in vogue among collectors. Once in a while, too, I would get a book of fine design or handsome letterpress printing, or illustration, for exhibit purposes. We had a strong program of exhibitions, with many display cases in our reading room. I always considered such presentations to be part of the teaching function of libraries.

In building my own personal library, even though it was a “working library” of reference and research volumes necessary for the books and articles that I began to write, circa 1950, I was faced with the same old problem that haunted me as a librarian; a shortage of funds. Needless to say, neither librarians nor (with a few exceptions) free-lance writers draw a check of a lot better than the minimum wage. But I was in better shape than my colleagues, with a large library at hand. And, being part of the State Library staff and active in professional circles, I was known by other librarians as a reasonably dependable gent, so they were not loath to send out materials on interlibrary loan. Also, to make ends meet, I began to teach, part-time, at the University of San Francisco, so I had ready access to another quite good collection of American history.

But my beloved libraries were not enough for a prolific writer. Repeated and seemingly endless referrals to certain books made their constant renewal from libraries a real chore. So I was forced to turn to bookstores for personal as well as “institutional” purchases. Naturally, with a flattened purse, I preferred out-of-print bookshops to those handling brand new titles, although I soon discovered the bargains to be had at remainder tables. And I prowled more “used” bookshops than upscale “antiquarian” shops, although I met some great (and helpful) bookmen — California’s David Magee and Bob Hawley, and ex-Texan Franklin Gilliam, for example, in the latter category.

As I began to publish books and articles of my own, I was invited to write book reviews in my fields of interest and (supposed) expertise, beginning with the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1951. This work brought me new books on American travel, expeditions, Indians, military history, etc. And they were “free,” except for the wear and tear of precious hours spent reading, evaluating, note-taking and essay writing; time

which might have been better put to use in research and composition of my own works.

I retired as a librarian in 1979 after 30 years in the profession, but I have continued to write, and even to review. ('Tis habit forming.) I still collect books, but in a narrowing circle of subject matter though I have hardly run out of topics in Americana to write about. It's just that, by now, I finally have on hand most of the titles that I need for specific research.

Dick Dillon lives in Mill Valley and is a prominent Bay Area author and historian. He headed the Sutro Library in San Francisco for 26 years, and also was professor of history at the University of San Francisco including the Fromm Institute. Since 1959, he has authored 22 books dealing with California and western history, and also has written many articles. Some of his books are still in print in their 2nd and 3rd editions. He has received many awards from historical societies and book clubs in California and the west. He served with the U.S. Army during World War II, E.T.O. and was decorated with the Purple Heart.

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Franklin Gilliam

by August Brandenburg

This piece is being written to remember a bookman who helped me form a collection and in the process provided many moments of delightful conversation. Franklin Gilliam owned the Brick Row Book Shop, now presided over by John Crichton. While John carries on quite well indeed, I want to remember his predecessor here.

I never called Gilliam by name, so it wasn't necessary to deal with the question about what to call him. Other people I knew referred to him as "Franklin" or "Gilliam." One mutual friend called him "Frank" once, in conversation, but the name did not seem to fit. And "Gilliam" was pronounced something like "Gillum." This is one of those names pronounced rather differently from the way its spelling would indicate — a minor point, but essential as an aspect of his identity.

Gilliam was one of the dealers who helped me form a collection of Aldous Huxley materials over some years, and we became rather good friends. I very much respected his expertise and judgment as a bookman. He was delightfully unaggressive as a businessman, but when he had something good to offer he had a quiet way of presenting it and communicating that he knew it was good and deserved adequate recompense.

He knew Huxley material very well, having helped form a collection for the University of Texas. He mentioned having met Huxley's son once; apparently the meeting was memorable enough, but Gilliam did not report any special impressions.

He remembered his customers while traveling and scouting. At a book fair in Los Angeles, he said he had found something for me. He produced a copy of *White Corpuscles in Europe*, which he knew I could use. It was a fine copy in collectible condition, and reasonably priced. No boasting, just the simple statement that he had something for me back at the booth. I realize that this is a customary service provided by a good bookman, but I must say that it pleased me that he knew and remembered my wants so well, and did not extract large sums for them. He knew I was pleased.

Once when I visited the shop he announced that he believed that he had something for me, and returned to the library table from in back with a catalogue of a McKnight Kauffer exhibit, thumping it down triumphantly on the table (but not so vigorously as to damage the item). This catalogue of a 1937 show is scarce; it was in perfect condition, and he knew I was pleased. He told me that on the way to the airport he stopped at a bookstore in Van Nuys, and there it was. The implication was that the catalogue was destined for him, and finally for me. It was all very satisfying.

On another occasion he sold me a copy of the American first edition of Huxley's *Leda*. This was a very fine copy in slipcase. The cover of the book and the slipcase are in white cloth, and all had remained white — pristine — after all the years since publication in 1920. In fact, the slipcase is not always present with the book. It was almost too much

to believe, and he was as proud of the item as I was after acquiring it from him.

We had a number of discussions of Huxley as an author. Gilliam was appreciative of Huxley as an author, and felt as I did that Huxley's accomplishment was greater than that of D. H. Lawrence, in spite of the greater popularity of Lawrence. He mentioned the recent serialization of Huxley's *Point Counter Point* on television, and his feeling that it had not been a great success. (But I think that the book would be difficult to do well.)

We had a common friend in the book business, many of whose catalogues I had collected over the years. When I mentioned that someone I knew had insisted on borrowing the catalogues for reference and then apparently lost them, he said, "That man ought to be horsewhipped." Although the manner of loss seemed to me to be rather characteristic in this case, I could not but agree with him about the suitability of that punishment. That was an instance in which his wit was a little less subtle than usual.

I mentioned the insistence of my insurance agent on having my collection appraised, and we discussed the attendant difficulties. Gilliam said that if I did all the cataloguing he would go through and apply values, to save me expense. I appreciated this gesture, which also reflected more than a modicum of confidence in my work, although we never actually did the project.

He lamented continually about the cost of maintaining a store in downtown San Francisco, as I think nearly every bookman I have ever known there does. It seemed just a matter of time before he would feel it necessary to move.

Eventually he sold the store to John Crichton, whom I have known equally as long and whose friendship I also enjoy, and departed for the east. I was told a few years ago that he had died, and have felt that he should be remembered for his integrity, professionalism, wit, and just plain human warmth.

Review

by Dr. Robert J. Chandler

The Birth of California Narrow Gauge: A Regional Study of the Technology of Thomas and Martin Carter, by Bruce MacGregor. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. 673 pages; 600 photographs and drawings. Order from Stanford University Press, 1450 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, CA 94304-1124. Hardcover, \$79.95

In 1968, Bruce MacGregor published *South Pacific Coast: An Illustrated History of the Narrow Gauge South Pacific Coast Railroad* (Berkeley: Howell-North), which piqued his interest in these rugged California trains. *Narrow Gauge Portrait: South Pacific Coast* (Felton: Glenwood Publishers, 1975) with 261 newly discovered photographs, and, with Richard Truesdale, *South Pacific Coast: A Centennial* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Co., 1982), followed. Thomas Carter served as civil engineer, superintendent, and car builder on this railroad.

MacGregor, with an assist from the Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resources at Ardenwood Park, Fremont, lovingly details narrow gauge equipment. Builders' plans, photographs, and even color schematics show the construction of wooden Carter cars and Philadelphia's Baldwin Locomotive Works engines.

Wide outer margins in this massive twelve-chapter book further aid MacGregor, who "holds a senior post in knowledge management at Hewlett-Packard." We quote from the dust jacket, as we are uncertain what this means, but do attest that he successfully manages knowledge. MacGregor uses this marginal white space to present relevant photographs or explain technology through "The Field Notebook." Additional photographs throughout the text and grouped in large sections at the end of each chapter reinforce his points. It is best taken in small doses, as the sheer bulk of this 1.5-inch tome can prove exhausting.

California's 1870s became a time of Depression, the first, really, to hit the Golden State, and from that arose workingmen's strife. "The Chinese

Must Go!" shouted Dennis Kearny. Monopolies had been a fact of California business since the Gold Rush; in the 1870s, they just grew bigger. Of particular note were the Southern Pacific Railroad "Octopus," and "Grain King" Isaac Friedlander's cartel, which controlled three-fourths of the annual wheat crop. Both worked together.

In 1870, the first council formed of the Patrons of Husbandry, better known as the Grange. Through cooperative efforts, wheat farmers would fight monopoly. In 1873, former Republican Senator Cornelius Cole led the charge — but met the fate of the Crimean War Light Brigade galloping into the Valley of Death. Yet, south Bay Area farmers regrouped.

At the same time, rugged, remote areas such as Sonoma and Santa Cruz counties had redwood lumber to get to market. Narrow gauge railroads, which cost two-thirds the price of standard gauge, became the answer. Furthermore, their lighter, smaller equipment could take the steeper grades and sharper curves of mountain forests. Six such grain and lumber narrow gauge railroads emerged, two-thirds financed by banks and private subscription, not public money.

The Carter Brothers built cars for all, and MacGregor uses this theme to tie them together. His protagonists are dominant Thomas Carter (1840–1898) and his brother, Martin Carter (1844–1908), refugees from the Irish potato famine. MacGregor's diligent detective work, imaginative use of business records, and analysis of actual rail cars overcomes the lack of family papers.

In upstate New York near Niagara Falls, the Carters became civil engineers and master mechanics in Suspension Bridge, named after the 1855 railroad bridge to Canada. In 1862, Thomas Carter came to California to avoid the draft, and found work in the Sacramento Valley Railroad shops at Folsom. Martin soon joined him, and through various employers formed a circle of bridge-builders, car-builders, civil engineers, and all-around craftsmen.

MacGregor concentrates on the era from 1874, when Thomas Carter built his first flat cars, until 1880, when he retired briefly after a coroner's

jury fixed blame for a South Pacific Coast Railroad accident that killed sixteen people. Ironically, this tragedy on May 23 occurred on a picnic excursion celebrating the railroad's completion.

The Carter Brothers, though, ultimately made ten thousand railcars between 1874 and 1902. For their final two decades, the brothers, and then Martin alone, manufactured mostly city horse, cable, and electric cars. From 1877 to 1902, Carter Bros. Carbuilders was a Newark fixture. Thomas Carter died in 1898 worth \$1 million, so the business did pay!

MacGregor concentrates on the first 725 cars produced. Carter engineering made the difference and allowed the brothers to edge out San Francisco's huge George Kimball Carriage & Car Co., whose products were not well designed or constructed. Often, though, in the Depression 1870s, profit came only within the extra cost it would take to ship a similar car from the east. The Carters hoarded and leveraged scarce capital.

In 1874, Thomas Carter wisely chose Santa Cruz as his manufacturing center. Rugged mountains made its 1870 population of 8,000 innovative, ready to supply wood and iron castings for railroad cars and the skilled craftsmen to make them. Although the second smallest California county, Santa Cruz stood fourth in manufacturing, behind San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Sacramento.

The Carters built a variety of freight cars on standardized designs for 8, 10, and then 15-ton running gear. In 1874, they produced 8-ton, 24-foot cars. The few for a Monterey railroad cost it \$490 for a flat car and \$575 for a boxcar. For the North Pacific Railroad that same year, when Thomas Carter needed work to survive, prices were \$342 for each of 110 flat cars and \$438 for each of thirty box cars.

In 1876, the Carters introduced 10-ton, 28-foot cars — the length for standard gauge cars, and made them for the next twenty years. In 1878, the South Pacific Coast paid \$449 for a flatcar and \$536 for a boxcar. Heavy 15-tonners arrived in 1886, after MacGregor's period of study.

Inventive Carter minds standardized car technology and manufacturing. MacGregor painstakingly describes how the Carters used local sup-

pliers for lumber and labor to cut delivery costs and time. They simplified iron castings, leaving the wooden patterns with local foundries until needed again. They shipped cars as broken-down "kits" and assembled them at the railroads, some distance from their itinerant factories.

The Carters' first car work arrived with a March 1874 contract with the small Monterey & Salinas Valley Railroad, a short-lived, monopoly-squashed Granger effort to bring wheat to market. First in significance, though, came with California's pioneer narrow gauge. The North Pacific Coast Railroad emerged in July 1872 and Thomas Carter soon performed engineering work and bridge-building. In July 1874, he gained a contract to build 140 freight cars and two express cars, which his Sausalito factory efficiently produced.

Next, he built cars for the Santa Cruz & Felton Railroad. At only \$15,129 per mile of track, this railroad was the mostly cheaply built narrow gauge in the state. However, it took the most time, too, from 1873 to 1876 to construct 21 miles. Cars for the Nevada County Narrow Gauge and Santa Clara Valley Railroads followed in 1875.

In 1877, with the wealthy Nevada Bank of San Francisco behind it, Carter Bros.-built South Pacific Coast Railroad equipment approached standard gauge quality and durability. Thomas Carter became civil engineer, contractor, and superintendent — and needed three years to tunnel through the barrier crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Of these six upstart railroads, the South Pacific Coast earned money from 1878 to 1887; four were losers. In 1880, the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad's best year, it made only \$25,000. MacGregor ends California's narrow gauge era with this year, which marked the completion of the last of the six and showed two roads profitable. By 1886, the tentacles of the Southern Pacific Octopus grasped two-thirds of these narrow gauge pioneers.

At 9 x 12.25 inches, splendidly designed and finely printed, with this book the meticulous author has, indeed, brought forth a beautiful baby. Though *The Birth of California Narrow Gauge: A Regional Study of the Tech-*

nology of Thomas and Martin Carter was a long time in labor, all will enjoy Bruce MacGregor's 6.5 pound bundle of intellectual joy.

Gifts & Acquisitions

The Book Club has just received a copy of *Lasting Impressions : The Grolier Club Library*, a gift of the Veatchs. This book is a showing of the treasures of the Grolier Club, one of the world's premier bibliophilic organizations. The book shows many of the extraordinary items owned by the club, and includes books, manuscripts, bindings, book plates, calligraphy, as well as a general history of the club and its library — it is a wonderful collection to read about. (Such a volume may cause fits of bibliographic envy.) Thank you very much to the Veatchs for this very informative history of one of our bibliographic kindred.

— Barbara J. Land

Member Glen Dawson has sent us a delightful memorial to his late wife, Mary Helen (1918 - 2002). It is a miniature book of her *Sayings*, and the printing by the Castle Press and binding by Mariana Blau are a perfect tribute to the wit and charm of the lady's adages. For example: "If at first you do succeed, try hard to hide your astonishment." Thank you.

Serendipity

THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S MUSINGS

Lunacy has struck the honorable Board of this famed organization! At its September meeting, the board replaced (well, she did resign) a gorgeous, witty, vivacious French woman as Vice President with an old, pot-bellied, ink-slinging scandal-monger. Why, that choice in itself is a vice! In defense, the Board declared its action was to show the contrast.

The good news: The appointment was only for a month. Then the usurper might go back to his day job as Chair of His Majesty's Com-

mittee to Properly Name the Trans-Bay Bridge after His Highness, Emperor Norton I. In 1872, His Majesty, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico, decreed that an appropriate suspension span be suspended between San Francisco and Oakland by way of Yerba Buena Island. Factoring in the time it takes a bureaucracy to act, construction occurred some years later.

Background for inquirers who may think that we are in the same mental state as His Majesty: Joshua Norton, a Gold Rush merchant, lost a fortune and, some say, a mind. In September 1859, a tsunami of societal shock submerged San Francisco upon the sacrifice of United States Senator David Broderick in a duel. To bring stability to these perilous times, Joshua Norton proclaimed himself Emperor and benevolently reigned until his untimely death in January 1880.

Of more relevance, His Majesty supported fine printing. During his magnificent reign, His Majesty issued Imperial Bonds, commonly in denominations of fifty cents. Job Printers John Cuddy and Edward C. Hughes printed the first; respected printer Charles A. Murdock succeeded them as Imperial Printer. On September 10, 2004, a fifty-cent note of the fourth Cuddy & Hughes design hammered at \$11,500 — elevating them to the status of fine printers.

Some BCC members are just trouble-makers. According to Jane Ganahl in the *Chronicle* on September 27, 2004, Bob Haines is one of them. Some years ago, David Rumsey, a former photography lecturer at Yale University, then a real estate mogul, innocently wandered into this BCC member's Sutter Street Argonaut Book Shop. There he espied a kid's atlas. Date, 1839; copperplate map, the Republic of Texas. "It even smelled wonderful," he said.

Rumsey was on his way to becoming a certifiable cartomaniac — thereby bringing to mind that remark of English bookman Ed Maggs, "There are hallucinogenic fungi that thrive on books, so the responsible bibliophile will govern himself accordingly." Rumsey did not. Now, 150 thousand maps later, he knows the world, and especially the Western Hemisphere, from 1700 to 1900.

More importantly, beginning in 1999, Rumsey used Luna Imaging to place ten thousand of his maps on-line at www.davidrumsey.com — free for the using with a credit line. Additionally, Telemorphic of Berkeley developed Geographic Information Systems that allow seven thousand viewers daily to zoom in and out, spotting details not easily discernable on the originals, and simultaneously compare different maps.

Furthermore, this year Rumsey and Edith M. Punt produced *Cartographica Extraordinaire: The Historical Map Transformed*. (Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute Press, 2004; pp. 200, hard-cover \$79.95). In this beautiful 13.5 by 14 inch publication, they display 120 historic maps and use GIS to compare and contrast older maps with contemporary ones.

Meantime, at about 38 degrees, 30 minutes north latitude and 121 degrees and 30 minutes west longitude, the humid summer heat works in wondrous ways in the State Capital. According to Arnie the Gubernator, it transforms males into “girlie-men,” particularly if they belong to the opposite political party. Additionally, evidently inspired by the spirit of Conan the Barbarian, Secretary of State Kevin Shelley named his public relations man Douglas Stone as State Archivist.

Meantime, the Archives-attached Golden State Museum, originally established to exult in archives materials, transformed into the California State History Museum. It currently features an exhibit of Remarkable California Women, an honor long overdue. Now, Lieutenant Gubernator Maria Shriver has matched the museum name to its display, and “repurposed” [her word, not ours] it as the California Women’s Museum.

In our last screed, we drew attention to the Sacramento Book Collectors Club’s two inexpensive reprints concerning John Sutter and Theodore Judah. “If you snooze, you lose.” All three hundred of each are gone; seek copies in antiquarian book stores, SBCC or BCC proprietors preferred.

The SBCC’s third has now appeared, again for only \$6.95. City Librarian Ruth Ellis provides an introduction to Mary Ackley’s *Crossing the Plains and Early Days in California: Memories of Girlhood Days in California’s Golden Age* (1928). The fourth has gone to press. Buy early and often!

Continuing up the river, the Spring/Summer issue of the *California State Library Foundation Bulletin* contains a moving tribute to Saul and Lillian Marks by one of our Sacramento stalwarts, Robert Dickover. The last apprentice at Los Angeles' Plantin Press was our last printer, Pat Reagh. Since then, we went out and Koched another.

We now half-jump to Chicago; we say "half-jump," for we have not left behind the Plantin Press. On April 20, 2005, the Caxton Club will open at the Newbury Library an exhibit, "Disbound and Dispersed: The Leaf Book Considered," which will also include questions on the ethics of breaking up a book for its parts. These unsaleable incomplete copies do allow impecunious collectors to gather samples of early printing.

One prize: The Marks-printed 1971 leaf book authored by two legends themselves, Jake Zeitlin and Bernard M. Rosenthal. It featured a 1472 page printed by Peter Schoeffer of Mainz, Germany.

Plantin Press quality continued as leaves blew north. Another gem for display comes from the Grabhorn Press done in 1924 for the most esteemed book collecting club in the West. It contained a sheet finely pressed by the Venetian John Henry Nash of 1499, Aldus Pius Manutius. The work? The most unread book of its time, and therefore a Peter Kochian favorite: the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Our QN-L printer once attempted to unravel its mysteries before the Roxburghe Club.

"Go Back," we say. "Go Back! This exhibit is worth it." Or, "Go East, Young Man, Go East," as disoriented Horace Greeley declared after coming West in 1859 and then smelling too many musty books in H.H. Bancroft's warehouse.

From the BCC reading room, we snagged the Fall *Gleason Library Associates* just to read program director Peter Robinson's article, "Where have all the readers gone?" A marginalia headline encouraged our curiosity, trumpeting: "Terrible News!"

In July, the National Endowment for the Arts released results from a 2002 survey revealing that "fewer than half of Americans over 18 now read [literature]." Those that do are desirable people. They volunteer for charity work, visit museums and art galleries, and participate in their

communities generally. Non-readers, as Robinson notes, “have settled into apathy.”

In a sense, wealth and leisure time have always been prerequisites for an active and progressive middle class — look at mid-nineteenth century Boston or 1910s San Francisco, when the Book Club of California emerged. Yet, considering the multitude of pioneer California newspapers and periodicals that flourished through the 1950s — along with the Golden State’s many fine printers, Americans were a reading people. Then came passive television, video games, and the internet. Even BCC membership is down.

Similarly, *Chronicle* writer Steve Rubenstein remarked, after visiting an early September stamp show at the Jack Tar, that “stamp collecting is an old person’s game.” Philately is not helped when unused copies of most U.S. stamps issued since the 1920s wholesale at two-thirds face value. Possessors gain more using them for postage.

Collectible nineteenth century stamps and all on cover (stamp-speak for with the envelope) require good knowledge of printing, perforating, and producing, plus postal history, rates, and routes. As with antiquarian books and modern literature “firsts,” this type of collecting is not for the casual.

We heard the same grim news at a Sacramento stamp show on August 13. Chad Snee reported that within the five years he has been with *Linn’s Stamp News*, paid subscribers have dropped from 65 thousand to 40 thousand, while in about the same span, the median age of collectors has risen from 59 to 66 years old. Shocking to us, *Linn’s* has a greater number of subscribers born in the 1910s than it does from the 1960s.

Perhaps retiring Baby Boomers will revive philately, literacy, literature, and love of books. The aims and activities of the Book Club of California make it a bright beacon shining over a darkening sea. Perhaps what the nation needs is more Golden State “boundlessness.”

We were calmly reading our latest issue of *Puck*, a Gotham weekly, with a glass of California red at hand. “California is *boundless*,” fussed editor H.C. Bunner on May 14, 1879. “Boundlessness is the only word that

can describe the chaotic ideas of the western agitator, and the colossal impudence with which he advances them. It is 'freshness' raised to the nth power." Perhaps, Mr. Bunner, this constant "state of fermentation" has made California the most populous of all states in the Union. We need more "boundlessness"!

When budget cuts crippled the California Arts Council, "boundlessness" bounded up. Editor Donna Wares gathered twenty-seven California writers into five thousand copies of *My California: Journeys by Great Writers* (Santa Monica: Angel City Press, 2004; pp. 204, \$16.95). The Council sends all funds to children's writing programs.

In this delightful tome, Gerald Haslam writes about growing up in boomtown Kern County Oildale; San Francisco Poet Laureate devorah major describes the demolished Playland-at-the-Beach; Anh Do details "My Little Saigon" located in Orange County; and Michael Chabon becomes boundless about his beloved Berkeley: "Where passion is married to intelligence, you may find genius, neurosis, madness or rapture."

It's not our fault that we constantly mention Heyday Books; Malcolm Margolin owns the print media. Not only did the *Sunday Chronicle*, on August 29, run a glowing thirtieth anniversary salute to Heyday Books, but the Walnut Creek *Contra Costa Times* had its puff piece — er, tribute — on September 3. Margolin, 63, grew up in Boston, developing an ear for the ebb and flow of language, its eloquence, its cadence, its nuances. "He is incapable of being anything but a man of letters" is a universal opinion.

Kevin Starr, in his baroque Starr-spangled way, declares Margolin to be "hierophantic," that is, defines Starr, "Manifesting sacred power," adding, "There is something rabbinical about him." As Margolin comes from an Orthodox Jewish Lithuanian family, Starr's comparison is apt. From this Old Testament tradition and Western culture in general, Margolin has a insatiable curiosity for life around him, and an infinite sense of its beauty.

These traits propelled him to become the expert on vanished Indian life in the Bay Area [*The Ohlone Way*, 1978], and since 1987 a clearing

house for *News from Native California*. "I am tremendously aware of being a non-Indian," Margolin notes about his quarterly periodical, "a guest in someone else's culture."

Perhaps due to highly cultural and affordably priced books Heyday publishes at the rate of twenty-five a year, in 2004 it became a non-profit foundation. Yet, the way Kevin Nelson's *The Golden Game: The Story of California Baseball [1850-1969]* (\$24.95) is selling, Heyday's 501 (c) (3) status may be in jeopardy. Steve Becker, Director of co-publisher California Historical Society, remarked that the first 5 thousand copies disappeared within two weeks.

In 1859, Nelson recounts, Sacramentans formed the first baseball team in the Golden State, forcing the Bay City to respond. After all, "Sandlot Baseball" emerged in San Francisco in the open area around City Hall — that is, when Dennis Kearny was not preaching that "The Chinese Must Go!"

Nelson ended his book in 1969 with the arrival of five national league teams, but through the press, carried on the story. Back on June 3, 1888, the Hearst *Examiner* published Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat;" on September 24, 2004, the Hearst *Chronicle* printed Nelson's "Barry at the Bat." Both concern adventures with a "leather-covered sphere," but this time, it rushes toward a "bulked-up batsman," who has hit 703 home runs. Four times the call is "outside again" — until the denouement.

On October 4, we went to the launch of another Heyday, editor Steven Boyd Saum's *Each A Mighty Voice: A Century of Speeches from The Commonwealth Club of California* [pp. 487, hardcover, \$24.95]. In 1903, *Chronicle* writer Edward F. McAdams founded this club honoring the goal of Progressives to improve the human condition.

Each a Mighty Voice is the only place, quipped a Heyday employee in the midst of a huge book fair, "where you will find rabid anti-Communist Senator Joe McCarthy and protest singer Joan Baez under the covers together."

Others of the fifty-four world leaders who came to the Commonwealth Club to "give the best of themselves," include Theodore Roosevelt,

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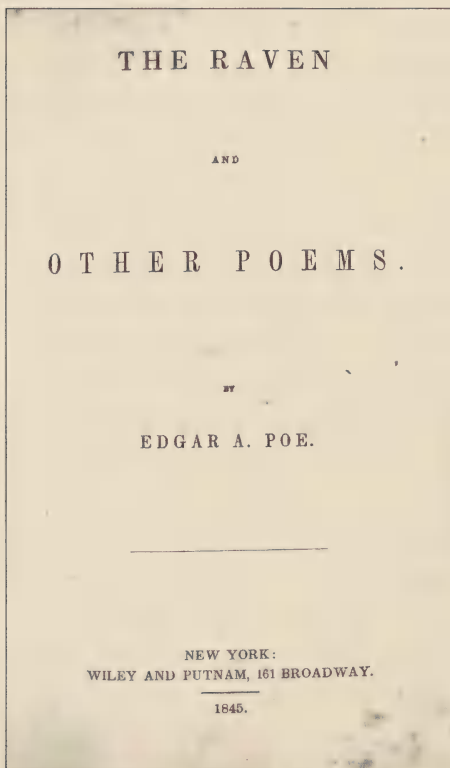
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Pictured:

Poe, Edgar Allen.

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First editions, first issue of *The Raven*, third issue of *Tales*.

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Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Cecil B. De Mille, Edward Teller, Martin Luther King, Jr., Tom Smothers, Nikita Krushchev, Bella Abzug, Randy Shilts, Jacques Cousteau, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Desmond Tutu.

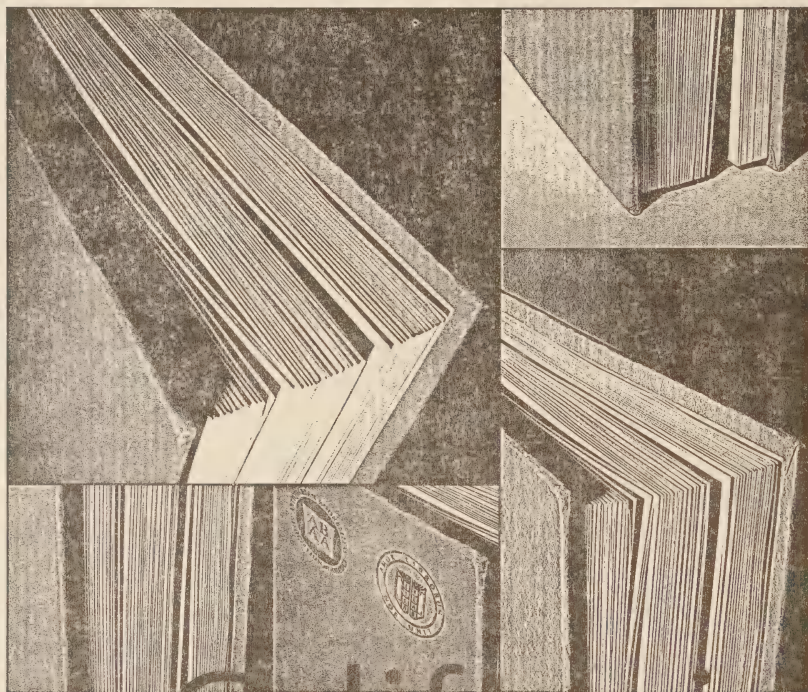
We further note that another Berkeley landmark publisher, Ten Speed Press, has reprinted John Arturo Martini's refurbished 1990 *Fortress Alcatraz: Guardian of the Golden Gate*. Martini emphasizes the martial history of Pelican Island before it became a Federal prison. Of lasting import is a case where Martini applied knowledge to inanimate objects, in this case, photographs, that lay misidentified in the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center.

How did the confusion begin? In 1864, the Army embarked on a bold refortification of the chief harbor defense of San Francisco Bay, ultimately mounting ninety guns, including two fifteen-inchers. In July, officers invited San Francisco photographers to record their splendid engineering achievements, and sent copies to Washington, D.C.

One recipient was an old time California land attorney, Henry W. Halleck — then Chief of Staff of the United States Armies. Virtually immediately, “crusty,” to use the nicest term possible for a polite publication, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton ordered all copies seized and the negatives destroyed. The Provost Guard complied.

All were gone until Martini — with the help of Sacramento History Center Archivist Charlene Gilbert Noyes, daughter of pioneer California Civil War historian Benjamin Franklin Gilbert — found eight CDVs of the finest views. Martini tells all in *American Heritage*, November 1992. This 2004 paperback *Fortress Alcatraz* contains them, and is yours for \$13.95 [Ten Speed Press, P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707]

The cold, stifling spirit of the 9/11 horror insidiously creeps into everyday life. Once upon a time, the 48-story Transamerica Pyramid welcomed visitors with lobby art exhibits and a viewing platform, honoring the accessibility of its founder, Amadeo Peter Giannini. Now, it stands fortified and grim.



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We are drawn to these remarks by an article in the San Francisco *Examiner* on August 20, headlined: "Pyramid Watcher Sought: Cops seek man for conducting tower 'surveillance.'" It begins, "A man seen taking photographs and making sketches of the Transamerica building in downtown San Francisco is wanted for questioning by police and federal agents." He was "described as Middle Eastern."

Police Inspector George Nazzal correctly said, "At this point in time, it's better to check and make sure." Gone is the spirit of the radicals [as we are writing on 10/10, Sun Yat-sen was one of them] and bohemians that inhabited the Monkey Block on that site! Gone, too, is the time we could cruise the Bay and not pass a tiny Coast Guard boat mounting a huge machine gun. Watching, always watching. We yearn for our lost innocence.

Ah, that past Age of Aquarius! Former BCC President and current President of the American Antiquarian Booksellers Association, John Crichton, recalled a scene some years gone in a local watering hole. An attractive miss, sizing up the handsome Crichton, asked him what he did for a living. According to the report in Leah Garchik's *Chronicle* column, the esteemed proprietor of the Brick Row Book Shop replied, "I'm an antiquarian book dealer." The sweet young thing cooed, "I just love fish."

The book trade just gets no respect!

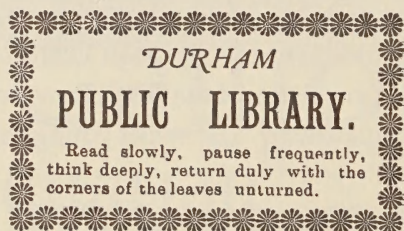
We, too, appeared in the *Chronicle's* successor to famed columnist Herb Caen. We wrote that when we looked at our "bookmarked" Amazon.com page, we found: "My *Life* was released today; we thought you'd be interested because you bought *Alcatraz: A Definitive History of the Penitentiary Years*."

We added, "A long paragraph then goes on to describe Bill Clinton's "exhausting, soul-searching memoir." Leah Garchik seized upon and blamed Amazon for the mis-transcribed "exhausting" for "exhaustive," but we think our home-grown Type Lice are responsible for this accurate Freudian slip.

This precedent emboldened us to write again. The matter — just another of the many slights the City has made against His Majesty, Emperor Norton I. In a modest way, we suggested how San Francisco might seek redemption. But that is another story....

We are saddened to report that death has taken Robert Ryal Miller, author of numerous works that shed light on heretofore unknown aspects of Spanish-Mexican California: *For Science and National Glory: The Spanish Scientific Expedition to America, 1862-1866* (1968); *Arms Across the Border: United States Aid to [Liberal President Benito] Juárez during the French Intervention in Mexico* (1973); *Captain [William A.] Richardson: Mariner, Ranchero, and Founder of San Francisco* (1995); and *Juan Alvarado: Governor of California, 1836-1842*.

We close with the 1880s admonition in the printed regulations from a Connecticut Public Library: "Read slowly, pause frequently, think deeply, return duly with the corners of the leaves unturned."



The annual exhibition of the Hand Bookbinders of California will be on view in the Skylight Gallery of the San Francisco Public Library through December 31, 2004. This 32nd anniversary exhibit, sponsored by the Marjorie G. and Carl W. Stern Book Arts & Special Collections Center, is free and open to the public. Telephone (415) 557-4560 or visit www.sfpl.org

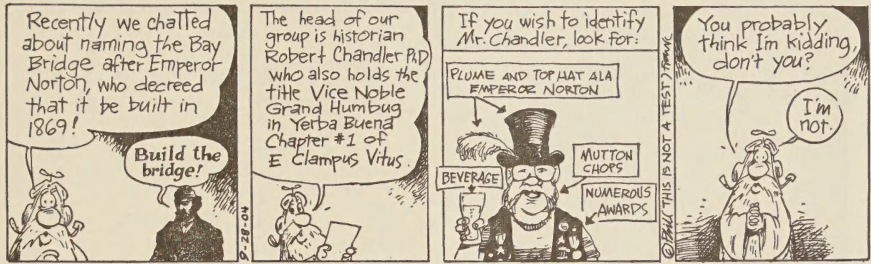


An exhibit at the Cushing Library, Texas A & M University, features book designers and printers discussed in Al Lowman's *Printing Arts in Texas* — Carl Hertzog, William D. Wittliff, the William R. Holman

family, Edwin B. Hill, the Book Club of Texas, and others. The exhibit, "Fruits of a Gentle Madness," stays through March of 2005. Information: (979) 845-1951 or email c-morrow@tamu.edu

FARLEY Phil Frank

San Francisco Chronicle TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2004



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Elected to Membership

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Linda Gates	San Francisco	Gary N. Handler, MD

New Regular Members

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Dick J. Levine	Chatham, NJ	Membership Committee
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